

Virginia Council On Women
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 31, 2022

(The meeting was held in person and virtually via Zoom.)

Location: Varina Area Library, 1875 New Market Road, Henrico, VA 23231

Members Present: Ashley Reynolds Marshall, J.D., Chair; Aisha Johnson, Secretary; Pastor Valerie Coley; Dr. Georganne Long; Joley Mauck; Kara Moran; Teresa Pregnall; The Honorable Donna Price; and Erin Rayner

Members Present Virtually: Mary Kate Andris, Ed.D.; Heather Caputo; Dr. Katrina Chase; Anh Tu Do; Kristina Hagen; Elizabeth Level; and Brigitta Toruno

Staff Present: Nikki Thacker, Chief Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth; and Suzanne Holland, Special Assistant for Advisory Board Administration and Director of Women's Outreach

Others in Attendance: Lauren Mason, Southeast Rural Community Assistance Program (SERCAP); Beth O'Connor, M.Ed., Executive Director, Virginia Rural Health Association; and Kelley Powell, Committee Advisor

Welcome, Call to Order, and Meeting Overview: Ms. Reynolds Marshall, called the meeting to order at 12:50 p.m. Ms. Holland gave an overview of the meeting. 2.2-3708.2 Code of Virginia gives advisory boards the option of having up to two virtual meetings per year. Attendees in-person and attending virtually introduced themselves.

Nov. and June Meeting Minutes Approval, August Meeting Agenda Adoption: The November 2021 and June 2022 meeting minutes were approved on a motion made by Ms. Moran and a second by Ms. Thacker. Ms. Mauk and Ms. Pregnall abstained from the vote to approve the June 2022 meeting minutes due to not have an opportunity to review the minutes. The August 2022 Meeting Agenda was unanimously approved on a motion made by Ms. Price and a second by Ms. Moran.

Public Comment: No public was provided.

Chair's Report: Ms. Reynolds Marshall welcomed and thanked meeting attendees for their attendance. She recognized Ms. Price for bringing to the Council's attention the topic of access to health care for women and girls in rural areas. Ms. Reynolds Marshall also spoke of the importance of access to health care for women and girls in rural areas. Ms. Reynolds Marshall sent

committee assignments by e-mail prior to the meeting and stated the committees cannot meet virtually. She expressed the desire to set committee meetings on the same days as Council meetings. Ms. Reynolds Marshall also explained the work of the other advisory boards. She then spoke about the timeline of the annual report. The focus of the 2022 report is rural access to health care for women and girls. A draft of the report is located on Google Docs. The document serves as an outline of thoughts and topics to be explored by the Council. Council Members are invited to contribute. The report will be presented to Governor Glen Youngkin at a date to be shared with the Council once determined. Ms. Reynolds Marshall stated that previous reports were cited by external publications focused on maternal health. Ms. Moran stated that Sections A and B are well-developed, and Sections C and D need additional content. All Council Members are encouraged to contribute content, and the Council edits and finalizes the report.

Board Administration Update: Ms. Holland provided the Board Administration Update and began by introducing herself. She explained that she is the Board Administrator who works with six advisory boards, including the Virginia Women's Council. Ms. Holland encouraged the Council to contribute to the Annual Report. She also stated that progress is being made on travel reimbursements that have been submitted. The delay is occurring with W9 forms being submitted to the Department of Accounts. Council Members are asked to submit a biography and headshot for the web site. Council also has a Facebook page and members are asked to like and follow the page. An update was given on the status of the Council membership. The Council had the second highest number of new board members, second to the Latino Advisory Board. Ms. Holland further described the Annual Report process and the meeting with the Governor's Cabinet. She is attempting to have a virtual option for attendance. The meeting will give Governor Youngkin and his Cabinet the option to ask questions regarding the report.

The Annual Report timeline is the following:

- October-December: Brainstorming, focusing on issue identification
- January-April: Information and data gathering in committee meetings
- May-July: Create a draft annual report
- August-September: Submit the report to Board Liaison to begin sharing with Cabinet Members and staff
- September-October: Present report to the Governor/Cabinet Members, and publish for the public

Ms. Holland presented the following Board recommendations that members should consider:

- Are we best in class?
- How does the Council compare to counterparts in other states?
- Metrics that show measurable results are preferred.
- Do recommendations reflect the Governor's priorities? Not all recommendations translate into policy or legislative changes. Is there a fiscal impact for a recommendation?

Committee Breakouts: The next 45 minutes on the meeting agenda were dedicated to Committee breakout sessions. Committee members discussed their desired areas of focus detailed in the following narratives.

Health Equity Committee: Ms. Moran stated that all Health Equity Committee Members are encouraged to access the Annual Report. Ms. Moran plans to call a future committee meeting.

Civic Engagement Committee: Ms. Powell requested that Chief Deputy Secretary Thacker become a Committee Member. This Committee should support all other committees to engage the public on the work of the Council. Outreach should occur to sororities, fraternities, masonic lodges, etc... Many Council and Committee Members are currently involved with colleges and universities, and nursing students can assist with engaging the public as part of community service requirements. Nursing students can help engage rural areas on the importance of health equity, and engage citizens through mobile applications and paper brochures. The Committee can make a request to the Governor that public institutions enact a policy regarding community engagement hour requirements for nursing students. Ms. Rayner oversees the Women in Leadership group at George Mason University for young girls. Patrick Henry University, George Washington University and Shenandoah University all have nursing programs, and the Council can request their involvement. Ms. Reynolds Marshall inquired about room for expansion in this concept, and engaging other medical students and professionals, such as surgical technicians. Ms. Powell replied that the Committee desires to start with a narrow focus and expand in the future. Ms. Reynolds Marshall expressed the need to focus on women with various barriers to health care and information. Ms. Mauck echoed Ms. Reynolds Marshall's desire to expand to medical professionals and students, in addition to nurses. Ms. Thacker suggested connecting with trade schools and community colleges to connect with high-demand medical fields such as phlebotomist. Ms. Rayner also suggested looking at broadband expansion into rural areas, which impacts telehealth access to citizens. Ms. Reynolds

Marshall further suggested contacting state organizations and request medical professionals to assist in the effort.

Education Equity: Chair Reynolds Marshall presented the Education Equity Committee report. The largest focus is the STEAM-H contest. The Committee will create and distribute a fundraising letter. Judges are needed. The contest will launch in November. Each region of the state receives two winners, one merit-based and one need-based. This contest relies on Council Members to spread the word about the contest and collect donations. Grant applications seeking donations should be made by the fiscal agent since the fiscal agent is a 501c3. Donations are accepted by PayPal through the Council on Women web site. Sponsors are invited to the award reception depending on the size of the donation.

Workforce Equity: Ms. Aisha Johnson presented the Workforce Equity Committee report. The following topics were raised by the Committee as concerns regarding women in the workforce. Do employers, public and private, offer a standard of 12 weeks of paid maternity leave? This would include access to mental health care for mothers and children. Do families have access to quality and affordable childcare? Do companies offer flexible schedules, outside of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., and remote work for parents who are primary caregivers; to include mothers and fathers? How can the Council support companies to look at pay equity for women in the workforce? Are companies addressing bullying in the workforce, employee turnover, and why employees are leaving? The "Quiet Quitting" movement is also impacting companies nationwide where employees, including women, decline performing some work tasks because they do not feel they are properly compensated. A need exists to develop programming to assist women in re-entering the workforce, especially after approximately 2 million women in the United States left the workforce due to the Pandemic and issues presented by the Pandemic, such as access to childcare and virtual school. Do employers offer literacy and education courses to employees who are not fluent in English, and those who do not have a high school diploma? State government can serve as a model to other employers by addressing these issues among state employees. Ms. Price cited a proposal in Albemarle County that all new employees receive 10 sick days upon the start of employment.

Women and Girls' Health in Rural Areas: Ms. O'Connor, Executive Director of Virginia Rural Health Association presented a report on women and girl's health in rural areas. The Virginia Rural Health Association is a state-wide activist health organization with a mission to improve healthcare among Virginians, and is included under the umbrella of the National Rural Health Association. Data shows the health of a population is determined in large

part by where you live. Data shows life expectancy is 20-30 years less in some rural communities as compared to more urban areas. The poverty rate is higher in rural areas and the percentage of pre-trial incarcerated citizens is also higher. Those incarcerated can have mental health issues, substance use disorders, and those in jail often lose their jobs and access to healthcare; contributing further to poor health in rural areas. Rural infrastructure also contributes to poor health and citizens with chronic or terminal illnesses that are not diagnosed. Lack of public transportation and broadband, and aging schools contribute to the lack of diagnosis. Rural communities often have a zero fetal death rate because rural citizens give birth at hospitals that are not in the communities where they live, and the infant and maternal deaths are attributed to the locality of the hospital and not the locality of residence of the mother and infant. Only 11 rural counties in Virginia have labor and delivery services at their hospitals. The following public policy recommendations are designed to improve rural healthcare, and maternal and infant health:

- Increase support for care coordination
- Eliminate chronic care management service code restrictions
- Increase funding for rural graduate medical education
- Expand access to telehealth
- Ensure equitable reimbursement by Medicare
- Expand Medicaid eligibility
- Establish alternative payment models
- Focus heavily on maternal care workforce
- Expand access to telehealth
- Support training programs
- Create more local birthing centers in rural areas

Ms. Powell inquired about engagement with medical students. Ms. O'Connor suggested reaching out to the Virginia Healthcare Workforce Development Board.

Ms. Mason with Southeast Rural Community Assistance Program (SERCAP) presented a report on the impact of water and wastewater on public and environmental health. SERCAP is a non-profit organization founded in the Roanoke Valley to provide assistance and access to citizens in rural areas to clean and safe drinking water. The organization has invested about \$520 million into serving its mission. Lack of access to safe water can have a negative impact on pregnancy and infant health. SERCAP can provide well assessments. Ms. Rayner requested brochures about SERCAP's services to distribute to the community. SERCAP also implements a well loan program

for low income rural households. The program provides a 1% interest rate on loans for repairs to wells. Ms. Mason will share this and other information with the Council.

Ms. Reynolds Marshall requested those who joined virtually to include Ms. Hagen and Dr. Chase to provide introductions.

Election of Officers: A vote was held regarding leadership positions on the Council. Chair, Ashley Reynolds Marshall, Vice-Chair-Kristina Hagen, and Secretary-Aisha Johnson were presented as the candidates. Ms. Price made a motion to adopt the slate as presented. A second was given by Ms. Rayner, and the motion passed unanimously.

Council Discussion/Finalizing Report: Ms. Holland provided guidance on the use of Google Docs and other shared formats to finalize the Annual Report. Two members of the Council can be in a shared document simultaneously, however communication cannot occur in the document between Council Members, as that creates a public meeting. A document has been distributed about rules regarding committee meetings. All virtual meeting options ended June 30, 2022. A committee must have a quorum of members in-person to conduct business. Virtual meetings for the entire Council are limited to two in one calendar year, and cannot be consecutive. The Annual Report must be voted on and that vote can take place in a virtual meeting. Ms. Reynolds Marshall stated that the final draft of the Annual Report is flexible depending on the meeting date with Governor Youngkin and his Cabinet to present the report. Ms. Reynolds Marshall's goal is to present the report to the Governor after September 26, 2022 with a goal of Council Members submitting all information to the report by September 13, 2022. The tentative meeting to approve the Annual Report is September 15, 2022, at 8 a.m., and will be conducted virtually. At least 11 members are needed to vote on the approval.

Closing Remarks and Announcements: September 22, 2022, Ms. Moran is scheduled to speak at an event featuring women entrepreneurs.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 12, 2022. Committee meetings are to be determined.

The meeting adjourned at 4:13 p.m. by unanimous vote following a motion made by Ms. Price and a second by Ms. Doley.

Respectfully Submitted,
Aisha Johnson, Secretary
Virginia Council on Women